

Dear Members of Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Erika Sanchez and I live in Norwalk, Connecticut. I support Senate Bill No. 1178: *An Act Expanding Connecticut Paid Sick Days*.

I have been a community advocate working with survivors of domestic and sexual violence for about 6 years. In this line of work, I have witnessed many heartbreaking experiences of abuse. I am speaking up in the hopes that the legislative body will understand that Connecticut survivors need a comprehensive paid sick days law that expands the definition of family so that they can get adequate care from everyone in their lives who is supporting them, a minimum of 80 hours for a full-time worker, the elimination of the waiting period to use, access regardless of employer size, and a quicker accrual process. Why? Because no one chooses when they are victimized, abused or sexually assaulted and so it is incomprehensible to set up an arbitrary period of wait.

In my 6 years of service to domestic violence and sexual assault victims and survivors, countless survivors were not granted the privilege of time and rest that was truly essential to their healing from such traumatic incidents. For example, there was a single mother who had suffered physical, mental, and verbal abuse. She worked for a cleaning agency and wasn't eligible for a day off since she had just started. She went to work limping because she was in desperate need of her employment and paycheck as she had just separated from her abuser. If there was no waiting period to take a paid sick day, she might have been able to instead prioritize her health and safety by immediately getting the treatment she deserved and taking the time off she needed to heal.

This is just one of the countless experiences of survivors of trauma and abuse. Bearing witness to these stories is why I strongly support Senate Bill 1178: *AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS*. I urge the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers to vote favorably this year to strengthen Connecticut's paid sick leave law.

Thank you for your time,  
Erika Sanchez Norwalk, CT